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## Gemcitabine: a new approach to treating pancreatic cancer.

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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES: To review the clinical benefit and nursing considerations of the new anticancer agent gemcitabine hydrochloride in the treatment of patients with pancreatic cancer.


DATA SOURCES: Peer-reviewed publications, books. DATA SYNTHESIS: Unsatisfactory tools for assessment of pancreatic cancer have led to the development of a novel end point, "clinical benefit," to assess improvements in disease-related symptoms and performance status. The first clinical studies to use this end point assessed gemcitabine. Results showed that 24% of patients on gemcitabine were clinical benefit responders compared to 5% of patients on 5-fluorouracil (5-FU). In patients refractory to 5-FU, 27% showed a clinical benefit response to gemcitabine. CONCLUSIONS: Gemcitabine provides significantly better clinical benefit than standard treatment for pancreatic cancer.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING PRACTICE: Clinical benefit assessments rely on oncology nurses to classify the response to treatment in addition to managing the side effects.

Publication Types:

- Review
- Review, tutorial

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